619 To the south of Tay is the Jubur tribe. This tribe is composed
241 of two branches, the Jubur of Jagjag concentrated around Tal Brak
233 and south to Hassakeh, and the Jubur of the Khabur from north of Hassakeh to Fadghami. The Jagjag Jubur have taken to growing cereals besides grazing, but the Khabur Jubur find little employment in agriculture because their area is arid and those who do not work on irrigated lands are mostly sheep grazers.

619 Another big tribe migrating between the Euphrates and Jazirah
241 is the Baggaret el Jabal. This tribe is completely nomad. It spends
233 the winter in the plans toward Deir Ezzor and migrates in the sum-
721 mer to Jabal Abdel Aziz. It used to cross the Khabur to graze in Jazirah but a dispute arose with Shammar Ezzor in 1949 over the ownership of some villages below Derbassiya, and supported by the Kurds, Shammar was able to drive Baggara back across the Khabur.

241 Of these tribes mentioned, Shammar is still mostly nomadic
621 though its lands in the north are good for agriculture. The Tay tribe is completely sedentary, Jubur Jagjag have become mostly sedentary, while Jubur Khabur are in a measure nomads because of the unsuitability of their lands, and the Baggara are completely nomads.

619 In tribal politics, Shammar stands alone. Tay and the Jubur
721 are traditional allies against Shammar. The Baggara are enemies of Shammar and friendly to Jubur. Raids of Shammar on Jubur are frequent especially in the region of Fadghami. The last big conflict between Shammar and Tay occurred in 1951 when over a hundred persons from the two parties were killed in a fight over the ownership of the lands south of the Rad.

6921 The Bedouin Sheiks of the different Arab tribes formerly re-
6621 ceived money grants from the Ottoman Government under the guise of expenses for the maintenance of law and order in their regions. These grants were in essence bribes to keep the Sheiks quiet. Unfortunately, the French continued this system, and relied on the Sheiks to control the tribesmen by giving the Sheik a fixed annual salary, each according to his importance. In this way, the Government implicitly renounced its right to deal directly with the individual Bedouin and dealt with him only through his Sheik.

This situation, which lasted until about a year ago, strengthened the Sheik enormously in the eyes of his tribesmen, and the Sheik
6221 invariably exploited the situation to his personal benefit. Thus,
425 in the Bedouin districts of Jazirah, the rapid development and
427

prosperity of the region during the last twelve years resulted in the benefit of the Sheiks who were quick to seize the meaning of the expansion in agriculture brought about by the introduction of the machines. They laid claim to vast areas of the best lands without opposition or control by the Government, and then rented these lands to machine owners, thereby getting rich at the expense of others and depriving the tribesmen of the possibility of tilling their own lands.

The concentration of land in the hands of the Sheik and his family is greatest in the Shammar tribe and in the Jubur whether though the Chiefs of the tribe own the best lands, but the Tay tribesmen took to agriculture earlier than either the Shammar or the Jubur and many Tay villages are owned by the peasants.

This short glimpse covers the Arab population of Jazirah, and we turn now to the other elements in the population.

II. The Kurds

The Kurds have been and are a vital element in the development of Jazirah. Their original country is the mountains north of the plain. Their language and customs have dominated the country so that even the city dwellers of Mardin and Nisibin speak Kurdish besides Arabic and Turkish. The Kurdish migration to Jazirah started in earnest after the failure of the Kurdish rebellion against the reforms of Mustafa Kamal. Some Kurdish tribal chiefs sentenced to death migrated with their tirbes to Syria. The French authorities welcomed them and they occupied the lands directly south of the border, greatly increasing in this way the number of Kurds already in the region. The Arab tribes saw their lands diminishing, but not being yet land conscious, they were satisfied to claim tribute from the Kurdish villages, which was paid for several years.

For the first time in perhaps nine hundred years, the French established law and order in Jazirah. The Kurds, farmers in their own country, began cultivating the plains. The land being fertile, the crops were good. The French authorities treated the Kurds well and the news of good crops and unbiased government treatment reached the Kurds just across the border. Migration became a continuous operation from the mountains to the villages of the plain. There were no obstacles to this movement either on the Turkish or the Syrian side, and the immigrants joined their cousins and relatives across the railway line. For this reason, and because a census was never taken, it is very difficult to estimate the number of Kurds in the Jazirah.

installments some 200 tractors of which the share for Jazirah was 71. This brings the number of tractors and combines to about 400 and 300, respectively.

It appears that the present number of tractors and combines fulfills the demands of the Jazirah if no new region such as the Rad is opened for cultivation. This is demonstrated by the fall in the rent of agricultural machinery, for whereas rent of the combine cost 33% of the crop in 1936 and between 22-25% from 1940 to 1948, the charge dropped to less than 20% in 1949 and 1950 and to 15% in 1952. This last share leaves a moderate and reasonable profit to the combine owner and it will not be possible for him to reduce prices greatly.

The same is true of tractor rents. The average charge for disc plowing a dunum at present is LS. 90-1.10 in the region of Qamishli. This is a competitive charge and cannot be much reduced.

Therefore, the conclusion is that the number of agricultural machines in Jazirah is likely to remain stable with importation every year to replace those machines which become obsolete.

b. Expansion in the Area Cultivated

The first regions to be tilled by tractors in Jazirah were Qamishli, Amuda and Dirbassiya. When no more lands were available around them farmers after 1946 went east to Tal Koshak on the border of Iraq.

After 1949 all the region from Tal Koshak to Dirbassiya became cultivated and farmers had to move to less productive areas around the Rad, south of Tel Brak, and in Ras el Rin. At the present time, taking Tal Koshak on the east and 30 kilometers west of Dirbassiya as the western boundary and south to the Rad and to Hassakeh, there is not a single patch uncultivated on a two year basis. In the first two years the region between Ras el Ain and Rakka was opened for cultivation by Asfar and Najjar family. This year the first crop grown on lands midway between the two towns appeared. The yield of barley was 5 to 6 times the amount planted. Around Qamishli the barley yield was 10 to 12.

The region of Deirik and Ain Divar or Jasiratibn Amr was long neglected despite its fertility because of impossible communications. No roads existed and the abundant rainfall stopped all transport for six months of the year. Within the last two years the Government

133 makes it the biggest river in Syria after the Euphrates. A short description of the Khabur valley was given earlier and the great possibilities of the river remain undeveloped. Unlike the Euphrates, especially in its lower reached, the Khabur valley is narrow. The alluvial plain does not extend more than five hundred meters on each bank in most places and then the land rises to a height of 10-50 meters over a distance of severl kilometers.

812 406 The alluvial plain along each bank has been more or less irrigated and planted by primitive methods such as the kard and the naqourah or dulab since old times. The kard can irrigate about fifteen dunums and the naqourah, if in good condition, can produce a flow of less than two inches of water and raise it to a height of a maximum six meters which is the diameter of the wheel. More prosperous Bedouins combine two or three naqourahs on the same axis and got a flow of about 3-5 inches. The naqourah is evidently a cheap way to raise water, but its construction is costly. Assuming that a Bedouin wants to build a naqourah on a new site, he has to erect a sort of a dam with stones on about half the river's width to raise the river's level and direct its flow towards his naqourah. Since stone is not abundant along the Khabur and has to be carried long distances, it becomes the job of specialized carpenters to construct the wheel, erect its supports, and balance it. This may cost another LS 1,500. 465 The carpenter who constructs the wheel or naqourah becomes responsible for its maintenance and is paid yearly 11 percent of the yield of the land irrigated in lieu of wages.

241 The staple crops of the Khabur were formerly wheat in winter and sorghum in summer. Sorghum was preferred to every other summer crop because it provides food for both man and beast. Lately, the naqourah peasants began planting sesame and in the last two years cotton, but reverted this year to sorghum and sesame as the main summer crops.

511 244 427 Unlike the Kurdish or even the Bedouin peasant of northern Jazirah, the Khabur peasant is very poor and primitive. Rarely does he own one cow to use for plowing. Usually two or more farmers join to provide one team. For this reason the strip of land which he can cultivate for wheat or sesame does not exceed 20-30 dunums, of which half the yield goes to the owner of the land who provides water. This is to compare with 250-300 dunums cultivated by the Kurdish farmer, of which he has to pay only the rent of the combine for the harvest.

This method did not enjoy great favor with the peasants of Jazirah for several reasons. In the first place, the ignorant peasant, whether Bedouin or Kurd, found difficulty in applying for the advance authorization and in fulfilling the formalities required for receiving it. Secondly, the peasant aspired often to a larger area than that allowed to him by this method. Thirdly, the peasant did not trust the Government, from which he was used only to oppression and corruption during Turkish rule. He was afraid that by the end of the ten years he would not be granted the promised land. Fourthly, the peasant did not trust his neighbors, his Sheik, or his Agha. He was afraid that during these ten years and before he received the deed for his land one of them would manage to drive him away and get the land for himself.

For all these reasons combined, the peasant wanted a way that enabled him to receive more than 500 dunums of land, that rid him of the necessity of applying to Government officials, and that put in his hands an undisputable title to his land in a reasonably short time.

All these desires were satisfied if the peasant followed the second method of land acquisition described by law. The law provided that, without previous authorization, anyone can acquire title to waste land if he cultivates it and pays to the State so much per dunum. No limit was set on the area which a farmer could acquire in this way. The State was interested in extending agriculture and offered encouragement to those who reclaimed land. The area which a farmer could own in this way was limited only by his ability to cultivate and plant. He could at any moment ask the appropriate officials to make a survey of his cultivated area, ask them to fix a price per dunum, pay the price, and get his deed in the first year of cultivation. In the nineteen forties, the price per dunum was usually set at LS50.

II. Partnership in Land Between the Tribesmen and the Tractor Owner

To avail himself of these advantages, the peasant had recourse to the city dweller owner of a tractor. The usual situation was that a group of peasants have occupied a large area of about 10,000 dunums within the boundaries of their tribe, of which they were able to cultivate only some 2000. They offered the tractor owner half the 10,000 dunums on condition that he brings his tractor to the village

and cultivate all the area. Usually the tractor owner took upon himself also to pay all Government dues and the price of all the land as fixed by the Government, and to hand the deeds for the 5000 dunums to the peasants in one or two years.

In this way, the peasants got 5000 dunums instead of the 2000 they were able to cultivate by their own means, they received their deeds in one or two years instead of in ten, their partner from the city became responsible for helping them resist any encroachments on their land from the Agha, Sheik or neighbors, and they received their deeds free from any dues.

Around 1944, when demand for land increased, peasants began receiving money from their city partners besides all the obligations assumed by him and mentioned above.

The French wisely strove to encourage agriculture in Jazirah, and and finding that the procedure used for the acquisition of land was long and complicated, formed a Special Committee and empowered it to grant land and issue valid deeds while abrogating some of the usual processes of law. Some lands were distributed in this manner and the French were accused of using their influence to the benefit of their political sympathizers. But in general, the Committee did a good job of stabilizing and legalizing the ownership of some lands.

The great majority of the land owned by tractor owners in Jazirah was acquired in partnership with the peasants. A few of the inhabitants of Mardin and Nisibin had titles to lands from the Ottoman Government. In rare instances, a few individuals went to the Land Registration Official in Turkey and bought from him forfeited deeds covering very large areas. But in general the titles in the hands of property owners in Jazirah were acquired in the manner described above.

Because there was no survey in the Ottoman Empire, Ottoman land laws, adopted and amended by the French and applied to Syria, considered that the boundaries mentioned in the deed were the determining factor in case of dispute, and that the area mentioned in dunums was of no importance since the surveying services did not reach all parts of the country. For this reason, all deeds in Syria give the boundaries as exactly as possible, and give an approximate estimate of the area in dunums, except where surveying has remedied the situation.

LAND TENURE IN JAZIRAH

427 The custom in Jazirah is for the tenant to pay the rent in a percentage of the crop delivered to the owner free of all expense.

1. Land Tenure for the Peasant

427 651 Under Ottoman rule and because land was abundant and peasants scarce, the rent was fixed at 7L. The owner and the tenant were each responsible for the Government taxes on his own share of the produce.

The Ottoman Government collected the tithe and the werko as taxes on the land. The title, as its name implies, was 10% of the produce to which was added later 2-1/2% as special revenue for public instruction.

Because the peasant wanted to be as far away from Government officials as possible he paid the landowner 19-1/2%, including the tithe and the rent, and did not care how much of that the landowner actually paid so long as he remained unmolested by the public officials. This percentage of 19-1/2% is still prevailing and is known by the name of "Hassil and Tabo".

In 1924 the French found the collection of the tithe cumbersome and adopted a modified system. They took the average tax paid by the land in the preceding four years and made the sum obligatory. In practice, this meant light taxation on the land, but the landowner still received from the peasant the same percentage as when the tithe was actually paid. Later, when the tax of 7% on agricultural produce took the place of all land taxes and the peasant had to pay it when he transported his crop for sale, he kept paying the landowner 19-1/2% so that his percentage has come to mean rent to the landowner without the obligation on his part to pay the taxes of the peasant. What made the situation acceptable to the peasant was that the increase in population would have raised the rent anyway. He now pays this rent for the use of land and house. If the house is not included for his, he constructs his own house of sun-baked bricks, but retains the right to remove the wooden roof when he leaves the village.

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6: Government of Syria--35 G-4 (no date)1952 MD1 Syria MD1

II. Land Tenure for the Tractor Owner

The tractor owner gets better advantages when he rents land. 427
He also pays a percentage of the crop. It used to be 5-6% with the obligation to plant a "shkara" for the landowner. The "Shkara" is a certain amount of seed which the landowner provides and which the tenant agrees to plant by his machines and to harvest with his combine free of charge. The "shkara" is proportional to the area of land rented. It varies between 10-20 sacks of wheat. In the last few years when demand for land became great the rents rose to 10-12% with the habitual "shkara". Usually the rental contracts are for three years. They rarely exceed this period.

III. Land Tenure Along the Khabur

Along the Khabur rents are different in manner. There, the landowner provides not only the land but also the water for irrigation and half the seeds. In return he receives half the crop. The peasant furnishes his labor for plowing, seeding caring for the irrigation canals, irrigation and harvesting.

Rents for pump irrigation were between 7-10% until 1951. The cotton rush increased the rents for strips of land near the river to 15-20%, but the failure of the crop reduced the rush for land and the rent is down again to around 10%.

THE PROBLEM OF CREDIT IN JAZIRAH

The rapid economic advance of Jazirah in the last years is nothing 311
less than amazing. In 1941, in the region of Qamishli, for example, the farthest village cultivated was less than 20 kilometers south of the city. All the land beyond was pasture for the Bedouin. East of Kubur el Bid to Tal Koshak, a distance of 60 kilometers, the land was similarly idle. There was not a single tractor in the region of Ras el Ain, and not a single water pump on the Khabur aside from those of the Assyrians.

Qamishli itself, the principal town of Jazirah, had no electric 361
light, no paved roads, no sewage system, and very few acceptable 365
houses to live in. The same was true in a larger measure of the other towns of Jazirah.

penetrated more deeply into the settled land gradually changed from nomadic pasturage to sedentary agriculture. They grew wheat and other cereals wastefully and by primitive methods which had not changed for many generations; sometimes using the remnants of the Roman irrigation system, but more often relying upon the rain and the sparse streams; producing mainly for subsistence, but selling what surplus they had in the towns. After the early Islamic period there was an uninterrupted decline in the agricultural productivity of the country. Its causes were mainly political: the exactions of tax-collectors and the depredations of civil war. The constant immigration of new Beduin tribes prevented the maintenance of a stable agricultural life in all except the coastal regions. The Beduin always looked upon the settled land as a source of plunder, and gave no willing allegiance to any Government, or to any law except their own customary codes. Periodically the peasants' work was set back by the incursions of the nomads, and the constant threat of raids served as a discouragement from enterprise. The margin of cultivation was in consequence always shifting and uncertain; it moved eastwards into the desert when the Government was strong enough to hold back the Beduin or induce them to settle on the land, and when the Government was weak the opposite process took place.

In consequence of the change to agriculture, the relationship between tribesman and tribal chief was replaced by, or rather transformed into, that of peasant and landowner. Syria was a feudal country. Until the seventeenth century the lords had held their lands on condition of performing military service; but later the feudal army fell into disuse, and a new feudalism grew up based upon tax-farming. The Pasha of the province was normally the chief tax-farmer; he was required to transmit an annual tribute to Constantinople, and in return was allowed to squeeze as much as he could out of his subjects. Beneath him there was a hierarchy of feudatories, farming their districts or villages on similar terms. In some districts they were Ottoman officials, but in others the right of collecting taxes was given to the local or tribal chiefs, who were virtually autonomous. This was especially so in mountainous districts like Lebanon, Jebel Druze and the Alawi district.

The feudatory's tenure was precarious, and his power

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1

threatened by the avarice of his superiors, the encroachment of his equals and the insubordination of his vassals. The size of domains and the fortunes of noble families were always changing. A certain stability was, however, given to the system by the practice of turning lands into religious trusts (Waqfs) for religious or charitable objects. Families which were the custodians of such trusts, which benefited from them in other ways, or which by tradition filled important religious positions, had a better chance of retaining their wealth and influence than those which had become rich and powerful through tax-farming.

At the bottom of the feudal structure were the cultivators, who were serfs of their immediate lords, owing them a variety of feudal dues and oppressed by them. The usual practice was for a village to hold and cultivate its land in common; small individual holdings were the exception.

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Sometimes the local dynasts were adventurers, ruling by the sword alone and without any support from local tradition. But often their rule was firmly based upon local sentiment and loyalty: a localism which was reinforced by tribalism and, in those districts in which compact religious minorities were settled, by sectarianism. This was especially so in Lebanon; but over the whole country it is true to say that the local community was the real political and social unit. There was no effective consciousness of an Arab nation, and 'Syria' was no more than a geographical expression; nor was there any sense of responsibility for the Government, which was generally regarded as essentially hostile, an instrument of oppression.

Side by side with the life of the countryside, there went on the distinctive life of the Syrian towns. The immemorial stopping-places on the trade-routes—the ports, the bazaar-towns and the caravan-towns—kept something of their greatness in the Ottoman period. There was still a lively transit-trade; Syrian wheat and fruit still went to Egypt, cottons and silks to Europe. The town-populations were Arabic in language, and their ways were deeply influenced by Arab customs; but their social structure differed from that of the countryside, and was determined by their peculiar economic function. They were naturally more open to influences

14:International Bank S-5 (1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

likely to decline somewhat when the survey is completed for the Hauran and Djebel Druze where small peasant ownership predominates.

Water for irrigation is supplied chiefly by merchants and wealthy landowners who have the means to install pumps. Similarly, the ownership and operation of modern agricultural machinery are primarily confined to large operators in the Jezireh.

Ownership of the critical factors of production carries with it the ability to demand a large share of the output. In areas where rainfall is inadequate the pump owner, who is frequently not the landowner, can exact from 45% to 60% of the crop simply for the water he supplies. Where labor is plentiful and rainfall adequate, the landowner can get up to half of the crop simply by allowing others to cultivate his land. On the other hand, in the Jezireh land is plentiful by comparison with labor and rents for only a 10-15% share of the crop. Here the owners of tractors and combines control the central factor of production and can command the lion's share of the output.

The small cultivators have no capital or access to capital that would enable them to acquire more land, better machinery and livestock, pumps and other means of production by which to raise their standard of living and make themselves independent. Nor are they organized in cooperatives to undertake these things collectively. Even the larger farmer frequently has great difficulty in getting necessary capital on reasonable terms.

One of the most important objectives of an agricultural program is therefore to provide an adequate volume of credit on equitable terms in order to make the needed means of production more generally accessible. The organization of cooperatives to facilitate group action among small farmers should be another aim. No single peasant, for example, has enough resources to sink a well or install a pump, but a group of peasants could pool their resources to this end. Finally, it would appear vital to conserve the good land remaining in state domain for the purpose of settling landless peasants and Bedouins and thus gradually increasing proprietorship.

4. *Despite the existence of many large properties, land is predominantly tilled in small holdings by tenants or peasant-owners who earn a rather precarious livelihood.*

Large-scale exploitation prevails only in the Jezireh and to some extent in Aleppo where land is farmed in big units with mechanized equipment and paid labor. Even the large estates are for the most part farmed in small units by sharecroppers who are tenants at will, seldom cultivate the same

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241 423 427 [452] piece of land for long and thus have virtually no incentive to improve the land. Many large landowners do little beyond collecting their share of the crop, leaving relations with their tenants in the hands of agents. They often stake their tenants to seed, livestock or implements or tide them over with food and clothing until the harvest comes in; and in the absence of adequate credit institutions they thus serve a useful function. In most cases, however, such assistance in cash or kind is given on terms which conceal extremely high rates of interest. In other cases credit may be furnished without interest by landlords conforming strictly to the Islamic code. It must be recognized also that some and probably a growing number of large landowners take a more active interest in the management of their land and have been instrumental in introducing new crops such as cotton. Progressively minded owners of large estates, when interested in improved crop rotation and methods of production, can become the means for more rapid advancement of agriculture.

241 423 The small peasant-owners and sharecroppers, who carry on most of the agriculture, produce primarily for their own consumption. Their output is little influenced by market prices, for they must produce to eat and with the balance they buy such simple necessities as they can. Most of them wrest a bare living from the soil and are chronically in debt to the merchant, the professional moneylender or the landlord. Unable to bring their produce to the market or to wait for better prices, they must accept the price offered to them locally for whatever they produce in excess of their own needs. They till their land with methods hallowed by time, and their equipment for the most part consists only of a pair of draft animals and a wooden, iron-tipped plow.

Any program of assistance to agriculture must obviously focus largely on these cultivators. It must show them how to improve their methods of production, provide them with better seeds, equipment and animals. Through the organization of cooperatives and the provision of adequate agricultural credit it should help to free them gradually from excessive dependence on the landlord, merchant and moneylender. It must also pay attention to tenancy problems with the objective of establishing greater security of tenure, providing more incentive to cultivators and achieving a more equitable sharing of the produce of the land.

423 5. *The uncertainty and confusion surrounding land titles is another obstacle to land improvement.*

The uncertainty surrounding land titles has been largely inherited

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immediate family. It also provided that in adjudicating title deeds in which the area derived from the indicated boundaries of the property was greater than the area mentioned in the deed, the boundaries would govern at least to the extent that they gave each member of the titleholder's family a minimum of 200 hectares. The mission urges that these provisions, which have apparently not yet been applied, be enforced as rapidly as possible. Their application would inflict no undue hardship, and would increase significantly the amount of revenue-earning state domain. Above all, it would put at the government's disposal more good land to be retained as a reserve for the ultimate settlement of landless or virtually landless peasants. Much of the land now left to the state is too marginal for successful settlement.

Careful management of state domain is necessary to ensure that the state derives from it the maximum revenue and that land not really suitable for cultivation is reserved for pasture or forest. The government is not equipped at present to exercise adequate supervision. Land is often tilled without authorization, thus depriving the government of revenue and often encouraging the cultivation of land which can be expected to produce a satisfactory harvest only in years of exceptionally high rainfall. Until cultivable land is required for settlement, it should be leased, as at present, to private operators who have the necessary machinery to till it. Thus land in the Jezireh which is recaptured under the provisions of Legislative Decree No. 135 might well be leased to those who now cultivate it, so that existing units of exploitation are not disturbed until the land is needed for distribution. However, current rentals for state land, even though they have been rising in recent years, still seem unduly low. Judging from private rental arrangements prevailing in the Jezireh, for example, the state should be able to charge an average rental of at least £S 5-6 per hectare instead of only a little over £S 3 as at present. In this way the government can add to the funds available for financing development.

Forestry and State Domain

The management of state domain should look also to the preservation and improvement of forest areas on government land. Syria has unfortunately been almost entirely denuded of forests. Although some 448,000 hectares are listed officially as "forest", 348,000 hectares consist either of

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gests, therefore, that this tax be complemented by a new land tax. The rate of such a tax should increase with the size of landholdings, and small holdings should be entirely exempt. The rates must also be in accordance with the yield of the land; but the mission suggests that they be kept rather low (e.g., not more than £S 2-3 per hectare on the average) so that a detailed, complex classification of land in accordance with productivity may be avoided. In another section of this report the mission proposes that the present schedular income taxes be supplemented by a global income tax levied at a moderate rate. In our opinion, income from agriculture should be included in the scope of such a global tax. The ascertainment of income from land is by no means as difficult as is generally supposed.

In addition to taking these steps, the government should pay special attention to the improvement of the lot of tenant farmers. In general, measures should be adopted to increase the tenant's share of the output, to give him greater security of tenure and to make him less dependent on the landlord as a source of credit and supplies.

The economic bargaining power of the landlord vis-à-vis the tenant and of the pump owner vis-à-vis the cultivator is so great that the landlord and pump owner obtain a rather excessive share of the output of the land. It would be desirable to establish a commission to study the various forms of association in the exploitation of agricultural land which prevail in different parts of Syria and to make recommendations designed not only to make these arrangements more equitable but also to put them on a basis which would give the actual cultivator of the land more incentive to improve his agricultural methods. Such a commission could work out the terms of written contracts which would be applicable to various types of association. It could also devise ways of giving greater security of tenure to the tenants. The latter can generally be ousted at will by landlords and the land they receive for cultivation is so frequently reallotted that they acquire no interest in its permanent improvement. Finally, it would be appropriate to consider the establishment of local land tenure commissions to settle, in a manner comparable to settlement of labor conflicts, disputes among the parties sharing in the exploitation of the land.

A number of measures to foster cooperatives, provide more ample credit and establish machinery for assisting the farmer at the village level are recommended elsewhere in this report. It is important that these measures

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to apply, it seems desirable to abolish it and to subject sales of livestock 651
and wool, hides and skins to the 7% agricultural production tax applied to marketed produce. Milk, butter and cheese might be exempt for social reasons.

Export taxes. The mission believes that at present prices cotton cultivation is still sufficiently profitable to warrant continuation of the existing export tax. We have, however, recommended that the tax should be revised to make its rate responsive to price changes. We are not prepared to formulate a precise schedule of rates, but we do recommend that the principle of the sliding scale be adopted and put into effect at once. Early action is desirable so that cotton growers may make their plans with the assurance that the export tax will be automatically adjusted if prices have fallen by the time the crop is marketed. This revision would introduce a desirable element of flexibility in the tax and would thereby minimize adverse effects on production. In selecting the schedule of rates it would be advisable to bear in mind the revenue needs of the state and to avoid going too far in the direction of flexibility, however desirable that characteristic may be from the point of view of production incentives.

Excises and import duties. Increased taxes on non-essential consumption items should be regarded as one of the principal sources of the additional revenue required to finance an expanded development program. In the absence of an efficient personal income tax, excises and import duties on non-essentials can also help to offset the regressive bias of the tax system.

It has already been stressed that valuations for purposes of ad valorem import duties should be based on the free exchange rate rather than the official rate. Under the present arrangement duties appear to be much higher than they actually are and it is by no means certain that the combination of high nominal rates of duty and artificially low valuations always results in a tax liability which reflects a considered policy. Where the change in valuation method produces a higher effective duty than is desired, nominal rates of duty could be adjusted.

Revenue from state domain. The mission believes that Syria should 651
obtain more revenue from state domain lands. According to figures sup- 427
plied by the Ministry of Agriculture, the government is obtaining £S 1.8 million annually from rental of 551,000 hectares of state land, or approximately £S 3.30 per hectare. We think that rentals should be increased to at least £S 5 per hectare. At current prices of wheat and barley this would equal about 10% of net yield (that is, gross yield less seed). The

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651 increase would add approximately £S 1 million per year to revenues.
427 Existing contracts and administrative problems would doubtless cause some delay in putting this recommendation into effect. Nevertheless, a significant increase in receipts could be obtained over the next few years.

IV PUBLIC DEBT

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Present Situation

The Syrian public debt amounted to £S 312 million at the end of 1953.[18] There is no considered public debt policy. Borrowing is not closely correlated with the government's need for funds, and in the past large amounts have sometimes been borrowed when the Treasury had available to it cash balances far in excess of immediate needs. In addition, no provision is made for regular service or retirement of the debt. The entire internal debt is held at low rates of interest by the BSL and the government has not attempted to develop a market for its securities among private investors. Moreover, the government does not seem to be fully aware that Treasury-guaranteed loans from the Issue Department to government entities and industrial companies are as much a use of the government's credit as direct government borrowing from the Issue Department and that the economic significance of the two types of transaction is the same.

The practice of financing expenditures by borrowing from the Issue Department is always potentially inflationary, but it can be acceptable and helpful when used in moderation and adjusted to economic conditions. It is objectionable if the volume of such financing is not based on a careful appraisal of over-all monetary conditions as well as financial needs of the government. Syria has so far largely escaped the inflationary consequences of resort to the Issue Department mainly because a considerable part of the borrowing in recent years has been offset by increases in cash balances. But borrowing when large cash balances exist is not only unnecessary but dangerous, since there is always the possibility that the various government entities might try to use their balances at a greater rate than the economy could absorb without risking inflation or the depletion of foreign exchange reserves.

[18] See page 261.

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operation, in striking contrast to large private holdings where the most modern machinery is used. Measures to raise the standard of living of this group must be one of the main objectives of any development program; in the first instance this must be effected through education, improved systems of land tenure, and better credit facilities.

Lessees and landlords. Some city dwellers have interests in agriculture as leasehold operators of tracts of state domain, or as absentee landlords. Although their interests rarely coincide with the demands of sound long-term farming practices, this segment of the population has been instrumental in opening new farm tracts (such as the Jezireh) and in introducing new crops, thereby contributing much to the national economy. The cultivation of the large absentee holdings is generally left to sharecroppers.

Sharecroppers. Each sharecropper is assigned a parcel of land from which, after the apportionment of the crop, he can hope to gain little more than a bare subsistence. In rainfed areas the sharecropper customarily receives rather less than 30% of the crop if he provides only his labor and around 70–75% if he also supplies the working capital; the percentages may be slightly higher in sparsely populated areas, and lower where population pressure is heavier. On irrigated lands the landlord takes 65–75% of the crop if he provides seed and water, and about half if the sharecropper provides the working capital.

In the long run, the position of the sharecropper would be more tolerable if the productivity of the land and his share of it were raised. At present, yearly land assignments may vary, with the result that the cropper has no incentive to improve the land. The restricted area of the assignment and lack of proper equipment, draft animals and money capital contribute to the permanent indebtedness of sharecroppers and their very low standard of living. Measures to improve their lot should include improved tenure status, Agricultural Bank and cooperative assistance in providing working and fixed capital, and resettlement schemes to relieve local land pressure.[1]

Agricultural Regions

In terms of natural conditions and the types of agriculture practiced, Syria can be divided in nine main agricultural regions.

The Hauran and the Djebel Druze. The Hauran and the Djebel Druze includes the mountains of the Djebel Druze and the Julani in the south-

[1] See Chapter 3, Sections III and VI, of the Main Report.

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planning stage. Here we add a comment with respect to the so-called agricultural phase.

In the past, soil studies were not very extensive, but projects were being constructed in areas already under cultivation, where the fertility of the soil was well known. Now FAO experts supervise systematic soil analyses, and the results of these studies will be very useful for the development of future projects. Insufficient investigation of the perviousness of the soil, with consequent underestimation of the water duty, has resulted in undercropping in some irrigated areas. A striking example is the Homs Lake project, where the allowance of 0.20 liters per hectare per second does not permit full utilization of the cultivable area.

The mission therefore recommends that henceforth more extensive research under the supervision of both irrigation and agricultural engineers precede fixing of the irrigation duty. Since the soils vary little along the alluvial plain of the Euphrates valley, these studies could be confined to plots in Raqqa, Deir ez Zor and Abou Kemal, on the plateau west of Raqqa and in the Resafe plain south of Abou Hareira. These experimental plots could be quite small, water being supplied by small pumping plants or even by tankers. Provision is made in the mission's proposed expenditure on studies of Euphrates valley irrigation for equipment of experimental stations.

IV WATER FEES

The fees for the various projects, according to the revised schedule for 1954, are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 Annual Water Fees per Hectare

(£S)

Project	Size of holdings in hectares				
	0 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 50	over 50
Homs-Hama	6.25	15.40	20.40	23.30	25.80
Tell Magham	7.50	23.75	28.75	37.50	40.00
Mzerib	7.50	21.25	26.25	32.50	35.00
Senn	7.50	17.50	22.50	27.50	30.00
Makt	2.00	3.50	4.50	6.00	7.00

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312 427 In the mission's opinion the amortization period of 65-70 years is too long; if the same standards were applied to the new projects requiring large investment Syria's economic development would be hindered. We recommend a further revision of the basis for calculating the fees so that capital cost is amortized in a period of, say, 35-40 years, provided that in no case should the fee exceed the money value of the benefits to the landowner or cultivator. Benefits should be conservatively calculated to allow for variations in prices and yields of crops.

It also appears that although small holders might appropriately be charged a lower rate, the degree of progression in the existing water fees may be excessive.

APPENDIX

311 312 TABLE I River Flow and Government's Estimate of Irrigated and Irrigable Areas

Origin of utilized water	Annual flow (million cubic meters)	Irrigated area (thousand hectares)	Irrigable area (thousand hectares)
Euphrates	25,000	125.0	340.0
Khabour	1,500	20.0	90.0
Orontes	500	35.0	55.0
Yarmuk	450	3.0	7.5
Barada-Awadj	485	15.0	25.0
Kowek	75	12.0	15.0
Afrin	250	2.5	7.5
Sadjour	90	2.5	3.0
Baligh	150	8.5	10.0
Jagh-Jagh	90	8.0	10.0
Senn	360	0.5	5.0
Nahr el Kebir	150	0.5	2.0
Total	29,100[a]	232.5	570.0
Underground water		75.0	100.0
Miscellaneous		67.5	80.0
Gross total		375.0[b]	750.0[b]

[a] To which should be added approximately 500 million cubic meters from other small rivers and streams.

[b] Underestimated, in the mission's opinion.

SOURCE: Directorate of Irrigation.

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The low fee for the Makt project is justified by the restricted nature of the facilities provided, but the fees assessed for the Tell Maghass, Mzerib and Senn projects appear low in proportion to the money value of the benefits to the landowners or cultivators, and are considerably less than the cost of pumping irrigation provided by private owners. Accordingly, we have recommended review of these fees.

APPENDIX

TABLE II Irrigation Schemes Under Construction or Projected

Irrigated area (thousand hectares)			Location	Functions	Expenditures (million £S)		
New area	Already irrigated	Total			Already spent	To be spent	Total
43.0	22.0	65.0	El Ghab	D + GI	1	170	171*
252.0	152.0	404.0	Youssef Pasha		—	150	150
140.0	45.0	185.0	Raqqa Plateau	GI + PI	—	300	300
85.0	80.0	165.0	Halabiye	GI	—	160	160
27.0	27.0	54.0	Rentfe	GI or PI	—	100	100
4.0	0.5	4.5	Roudj	D + GI	2	3	5
4.6	2.2	6.8	Mzerib	GI + PI	2	7	9
15.6	5.1	20.7	Ras el Ain	GI	—	30	30
4.5	4.0	8.5	Tell Maghas (LB)	GI	10	2	12
2.8	1.0	3.8	Tell Maghas (RB)	GI	—	6	6
8.0	7.2	15.2	Sahn Skour	GI	—	25	25
10.0	10.0	20.0	El Taf	GI	—	30	30
53.0	22.0	75.0	Markada	GI	—	100	100
8.0	7.0	15.0	Upstream Homs Lake	GI	—	15	15
3.0	—	3.0	Homs Lake (LB)	GI	—	3	3
4.5	0.5	5.0	El Senn	GI + PI	2	2	4
3.5	0.5	4.0	Nahr el Kebir	HEP + GI	—	15	15
15.0	—	15.0	Banda	HEP + GI	—	30	30
431.5	235.0	665.5			17	1,148	1,165

Key: GI – Gravity Irrigation; PI – Pumping Irrigation; D – Drainage; HEP – Hydroelectric Power; PC – Flood Control; R – Regulation; RB – Right Bank; LB – Left Bank

* Including local and national roads.

NOTE: The figures given above are only rough estimates. Accurate figures are not available because most of these irrigation schemes have not yet reached the draft stage. The purpose of this Table is to give an idea of the order of magnitude of the investment, extending beyond the scope of the mission's program, to be made for the development of irrigation in Syria.

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for study abroad should be a necessary part of the training of the senior staff.

The findings of research, experimentation and the experiences of farmers give support to extension programs. Much information is already available and should be transmitted to farmers, but more systematic and better coordinated practical research should be the aim in the future. The two functions of research and extension should be coordinated within the Ministry of Agriculture so that each performs its specialized service, in a manner that supplements and complements the other. Research must focus on the key needs and concerns of farmers and anticipate future problems. For instance, one of the emerging needs is to know more about good crop rotation practices, including better use of land now fallow.

Chart 1 indicates the mission's conception of a desirable organizational framework for the agricultural credit and rural development program it has recommended.

IV LAND TENURE

In Syria, the landowner group is composed of full owners, part owners, debt-encumbered owners, and owners with undetermined title. Owners range from operators of large commercial farms to small subsistence farmers. The tenant group is composed of farmers who rent or make some payment for the use of land, and comprises most of the farmers who live on the land and cultivate it. Most of the large owners do not live permanently on their land but operate through some type of sharecropper system. There are very few cash tenants. The sharecropper usually works under the direction of the landlord or his agent and is dependent upon him for farm supplies and operating capital. Often he contributes toward crop production little but his own and his family's labor. His status is more nearly that of a laborer than of a tenant. A true tenant has rights of occupancy and land use that are protected by law, while the sharecropper is very much subject to the will of the landlord.

In general, it appears that in the rainfed areas the sharecropper receives about 30% of the crop if he provides only his labor, and around 70% if he provides the working capital. In areas sparsely settled he receives a slightly higher percentage of the crop, and in heavily populated areas he may receive somewhat less. On the irrigated lands the sharecropper receives in

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the neighborhood of 20-30% of the crop if he furnishes only his labor, and about one-half of the crop if he provides his own working capital. The distribution of the returns on privately irrigated lands is, however, often much affected by the person who controls the pump.

Land Ownership

As in other countries of the Middle East considerable uncertainty attaches to ownership rights in land. By no means all of the cultivated or cultivable land is listed in the official property registers, and titles which are registered are often imprecise or conflicting in stating the boundaries or the area. The validity of many land grants made in the past is also subject to challenge.

By far the greater part of the land unquestionably belongs to the state, if only because most of the land is uncultivable and therefore unutilized and all unoccupied or "dead land" has always in theory belonged to the state. State land has in the past fallen into two categories: "state domain" proper, which is officially registered as belonging to the state, and unoccupied or "dead land" (*mawat*) to which no title exists.

Land other than state domain is held under various traditional forms of ownership including *mulk*, *waqf*, *matroukah*, *amiri* and *mucha'a*. *Mulk* is the only form of absolute ownership and covers only a small proportion of state land. *Waqf* is property held in the form of a religious trust and is not particularly significant as far as agricultural land is concerned. *Matroukah* is land dedicated to public purposes and also has no significance for agriculture. Most land is *amiri*, a type of hereditary leasehold. Ultimate ownership in theory rests with the state which can legally recover *amiri* land if it is not cultivated for five years in succession. The latter right is, however, never exercised, and *amiri* land can be said to be in virtually unqualified private ownership. *Mucha'a* is village land held in common but cultivated in individual family plots periodically reallotted among the holders. This form of tenure has predominated in certain parts of the country such as the Hauran and obviously gives little or no incentive to permanent improvement of the land.

Recognizing that clear and undisputed private landownership is a prerequisite to land improvement, the government has been seeking over many years to terminate the *mucha'a* form of tenure and end the confusion in land titles. *Mucha'a* land is being gradually distributed and converted to

15: Tamous N.G-5 (no date) 1951 M1 Middle East M1
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equipment, and the livestock. In reality the cultivator's share amounts to less than that, for he has to make certain contributions to local functionaries and to the agent of the landlord.

There is also clear evidence that unless the system is checked effectively at its roots, it will continue to perpetuate itself. Witness what has happened during the last 50 years or so. Irrigation has been expanded materially, mainly through pump installations, and total agricultural output has been increased tremendously; but the peasant has remained landless and impoverished. In general, he does not possess the ability or initiative to prove his legal claim to the newly developed land. In many cases, even when his right of ownership is recognized, the cultivator is not able financially to maintain the costly pump installation. He is obliged to work on a share basis with one who is able to supply the necessary capital and equipment, be he the chief or the merchant. Gradually, these become the owners of the land, and the original occupant becomes permanently a landless sharecropper. Through this process the virile and integrated tribal community of Iraq is being transformed into a demoralized agricultural settlement, under the control of an absentee landowner chief.

Syria affords another illustration of the magnitude of the problem. We witness here practically identical conditions of absentee ownership, sharecropping, and low levels of living among the peasants. The manner in which this system threatens the future of agricultural development in Syria is clearly indicated by recent happenings in the Jezira area. This has tremendous possibilities for irrigation and for dry farming. It is sparsely populated, and until recently has been utilized mainly for grazing by nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes. During the last few years cultivation has been expanded rapidly in the area. Modern machinery has been put on the land in large numbers, and bumper grain crops have been harvested.

On the surface, this appears to be the beginning of sound development. Upon closer examination, however, we encounter a different reality. The tractor has been put on that fertile soil mostly by speculators and absentee owners. Concern about the ultimate exhaustion of this great national resource is not upper-

15: Tannous N,G-5 (no date) 1951 M1 Middle East M1
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most in their minds. Furthermore, they put the new land under cultivation through an understanding with the local tribal chief. He guarantees them "protection" of the crop in return for a portion of the produce. Nowhere does the peasant figure in this deal other than as a laborer or a sharecropper. Nowhere do we see signs of the emergence of that badly needed class of small, independent, cultivator-owners.

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The situation in Lebanon presents a glaring and enlightening contrast between two systems. In the mountain area, the heart of the country, a strong tradition of private ownership by small independent farmers prevails. In most cases, the family farm averages about 10 acres. The soil is scanty and the terrain difficult; but the people have their hearts in what they own. They have blasted the rocks and built extensive terraces to prevent erosion; they have made the mountainsides produce abundantly of olives, grapes, figs, and apples. On the narrow coastal strips they have grown luxuriant orchards of citrus and bananas. More significant than all of this, we observe that the village folk in this area enjoy much higher standards of living. This is clearly manifested in their diet, health, housing, and a literacy rate of some 90 percent.

True, they have other sources of income, especially from emigrants residing abroad. Yet the independence they have gained through ownership of the land has endowed them with the initiative and the possibility to seek these other sources and better their living conditions. Unlike the sharecropper, who is doomed to his status, the small independent owner is free to move up the ladder.

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Our argument in this respect gains support from the situation that prevails in the rest of Lebanon — in the Akkar plain of the north, in the Bika valley of the interior, and in the mountain area of the south. Here we witness the predominance of the same feudal-absentee-sharecropping system that exists in Syria and Iraq. Here also we witness the same conditions of deprivation, lack of development and low levels of living. Our argument gains further support from a consideration of living conditions in those village communities of northern Iraq, of some sections of Syria and Jordan, where the people are independent and own

25: Warriner S-5 (no date) 1948 MI Middle East
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crease the productivity per acre and also to expand the cultivated area per head.

In the Lebanon, however, with its steep hillsides under intensive cultivation, there is a definite pressure on land resources. The limits of intensification appear to have been reached, and a large part of the village population supplements its income by work in the towns, and by remittances from abroad. If the land tenure system in Syria were less oppressive, room might be found on the land for settlers from the Lebanon, but as things are, the standard of living and status of the Lebanese peasant is higher; compared with the Syrian peasant he is a free man, and there is no inducement to leave the Mountain for the underpopulated plains of central or northern Syria.

LAND TENURE

Corresponding to these different methods of farming, there are different systems of land tenure.[1] In Lebanon individual small ownership is well established, and the pattern of village life, with its broad class of small peasant owners, few large farmers, and a growing class of landless labourers, resembles that of Europe.

In Syria, the greater part of the land is owned by city notables—the ruling class—and cultivated by small share-tenants. Though individual ownership exists in some districts, for instance the Beqa Valley and the oasis of Damascus, the most usual form of landownership in the plain districts of Syria is share-tenancy. The villagers bring their corn to the village threshing floor, and when the grain is threshed the landlord or his agent stands by and takes one-half of the grain. Towards this result he has contributed nothing; all labour, equipment, seeds, livestock, have been supplied by the tenant, so that his share is rent purely for the use of the land. The landlord is almost always an absentee, a city notable who only visits the land to collect rent.

The share taken by the landlord varies from district to district, and also varies with the condition of the land. According to an inquiry made by the French authorities, the usual division of the crop for non-irrigated cereals is 40–50 per cent to the

[1] The information which follows is mainly based on A. Latron, *La Vie rurale en Syrie et au Liban* (Beirut, L'Institut Français de Damas, 1936). The brilliant and profound study by Jacques Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*, is an indispensable authority which unfortunately was received only after going to press.

25: Warriner S-5 (60 da/c) 1948 MI Middle East
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S landlord, and 60–50 per cent to the peasant. The landlord's
● 427 only charge is taxes. If, as in some districts, the tenant provides labour only, and the landowner bears other costs, the landowner's share may rise to 80 per cent. For irrigated cereals, the landlord's duty is to provide water, and his share of the crop is then 60 per cent. Other irrigated crops are usually farmed by the landowner direct.

The tenant has no protection against eviction because these tenancy agreements have no legal basis, and are not covered by the provisions of the Ottoman Land Code. The tenant may be evicted by the landlord without notice, and no compensation is paid him for improvements made or for losses incurred when he is evicted.

S How much of the land is owned by large proprietors in Syria
471 is not exactly known. Roughly one-half of the grain sold in the market comes from large proprietors, and it is believed that about 60 per cent of the land is owned by them. In northern Syria, big landowners own 70–80 per cent of the land, and in the Damascus region 60–75 per cent. In the district of Hama, out of 114 villages, 110 belong to landlords, and 4 landowners between them own 86 villages. Generally there is a great desire on the part of the peasants for individual ownership, but it is only where there is some form of intensive cultivation that it can be successfully maintained. In the village of Kesruwan, for example, banana growing has brought prosperity to the peasants and enabled them to purchase land.

S Thus the custom of share-cropping reflects the instability of
471 grain growing in arid climates with uncertain rainfall and great
427 variations in yields. It is peasant indebtedness which supports
426 the large landowners. Two bad harvests in succession will mean that the peasants become so much indebted that they will actually reduce the area sown for lack of seed, and will therefore be obliged to sell to a money-lender or city merchant. The majority of the big Christian merchants in the town have become rural landowners in this way, particularly in Latakia and round Homs and Hama. In the Syrian plain districts, entire villages have passed into the hands of merchants through indebtedness.

S Most of these large landowners are city families, who take no
L interest whatsoever in actual methods of cultivation. Some,
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probably few, of the estates are the properties of old, wealthy families of Ottoman times, which still exist in Lebanon, such as the lands belonging to the families of Arslan, Jumblatt, Chehab, Khazen, but many of these have been broken up by the Moslem laws of inheritance. Other estates have originated from direct grants made by Turkish Sultans to influential politicians, as for example the two very large estates in the Beqa and the Litani valley. Others too were formed at the time of the general registration of property undertaken by the Ottoman Government when chiefs of tribes or villages registered tribal land in their names as their private property. Uncertainty about legal title to land gives the educated classes frequent opportunity for ousting peasant owners, and whole villages have come into the possession of rival groups of city notables, as a result of litigation among the villagers who have sought their assistance in establishing their title.

While the land-tenure system is thus a result of peasant poverty, it also perpetuates poverty by standing in the way of any long-term investment. The high percentage of fallow in Syria suggests a great waste of land resources, and there could certainly be some improvement in yields, even in dry land farming, if green crops were introduced more generally into the rotation. But the share-cropper has little incentive to improve the fertility of the land, since he has no certainty of tenure, and since the landlord will take 50 per cent of any increase. Since the landlords are not as a rule directly interested in farming, they do not themselves undertake long-term improvements in the land.

Three case studies illustrate the ways in which the land-tenure system hinders advance.[1]

One study relates to the large estate of Misherfe, near Homs in central Syria. This is 24,000 acres in extent and includes five villages, with 2,500 inhabitants. It is very extensively cultivated, only one-third of the area, 8,000 acres, being cropped each year. The land is divided into three parts, one with wheat, barley or *qatani* (mixed grain), one ploughed but not sown, and one left fallow. A small area, 200 acres only, is irrigated, though water supplies are sufficient to irrigate much larger areas.

[1] These studies, which were prepared for the M.E.S.C., are not at present available in print.

LAND TENURE

241 Wheat yields are lower than the average for Syria, averaging 4 hundredweight to the acre.

427 Almost the whole of the estate is let to share-tenants who are supervised by an agent, the landowners themselves rarely visiting the estate. The share of the crop taken by the landlord is 25 per cent on non-irrigated land and 42½ per cent on irrigated land. These shares are more favourable to the tenant than is usual, because it is desired to attract more labour to the estate which sixty years ago was quite uncultivated. As elsewhere, the tenants have no leases but live in fear of eviction.

The tenants are divided into five classes:[1]

1. Large tenants cultivating 6 feddans (225 acres) of non-irrigated land: 4 in number.

2. Medium sized tenants cultivating 4½ feddans (168¾ acres): 4 in number.

3. Small tenants cultivating 3 feddans (112½ acres): 60 in number.

4. Small tenants cultivating irrigated land and with an average area of 18 acres: 100 in number.

464 5. Wage labourers, who form the majority of the villagers.

484 Of these classes, only the small groups of large and medium-
454 sized tenants can live well, in the sense that the output of the
√11 farm suffices to cover the essential needs of the family and also provides a small cash surplus. The surplus is used to buy gold pounds and jewellery. But the other groups cannot achieve even a sufficient standard of food consumption. The standard consumption of wheat (barley in the case of the very poor peasants) is 14 kilogrammes of grain per month; to achieve this level it is necessary to crop about 45 acres. Thus with the present system of cultivation, the class of small tenants, who cultivate an area of 112 acres and would appear to have quite sufficient land, cannot attain the minimum because only one-third, 35 acres, can be cultivated owing to shortage of live-stock.

√11 These small tenants, who are typical of the farmers in the great plains of Syria, are very poor, living in one- or two-roomed
342 mud huts, and when there is only one room, sharing it with their animals.

[1] It must be said that the feddan in Syria is a variable measure and here is equivalent to 37½ acres.

SYRIA AND LEBANON

511 [164] their animals. Malaria is prevalent. The majority are heavily indebted. The tenants on the irrigated land, with an average holding of 18 acres, are also poor but less heavily indebted, because they can depend on a more regular income.

484 464 262 The poorest class are the landless labourers whose income in money and kind amounts to 530 Syrian pounds a year (1944) (£10 at 1939 prices).[1] This is a starvation wage, which means that they can only eat enough in harvest time, and in winter must subsist on maize, bread, and grass.

311 241 409 The poverty on this estate is therefore a result of the low productivity and the low proportion of the area under cultivation. One way of increasing the area cultivated would be by the use of machinery. Tractors were introduced some fifteen years ago, but proved too costly in relation to the low prices of Syrian grain; owing to lack of skilled drivers and proper maintenance they fell into disrepair. During the late war, however, as the price of grain rose, tractors were again used by some tenants who hired them from neighbouring estates.

812 Another way of raising production would be to increase irrigation since there is sufficient water to supply much more land. In this respect the estate is typical of the whole Homs–Hama plain, where much of the water which the French authorities have made available by irrigation goes to waste.

311 871 744 On this estate, therefore, the poverty of the cultivators is due to the landowner's failure to increase the productivity of the soil, rather than to his exploitation of the peasants; compared with other estates, this one is socially progressive, since the landowner's family have set up a school and also distribute medicines free of charge.

312 471 427 The second study covers a more intensively cultivated village, Ashrafie, on the borders of the irrigated district of Damascus. Less heavily supplied with water than El Ghuta itself, Ashrafie has sufficient water to irrigate 10 per cent of the total land. The total area is 1,600 hectares or 4,000 acres, of which 2,400 are owned by four estate owners and the rest by peasants. The largest landowner is an absentee, letting his land on a 50 per cent share-tenancy basis, with definite three-year leases (by contrast with the usual custom under which the tenant has no lease).

[1] This is calculated on a rate of 9 Syrian pounds to £1, allowing for a six-fold increase in the Syrian cost of living between 1939 and 1944.

1 [The estate of Misherfe, near Homs -- Analyst]

Pamphlet 8-5 (no date) 1943 MI Middle East
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Within this belt there is a large area of cultivable land still uncultivated, mainly for reasons of shortage of labour, lack of means of communication, and political insecurity. Uncultivated land is generally used for grazing, and in the 'Duck's Bill' the grass grows high enough for hay cutting. At present the cultivated area is some 481,500 hectares (1,188,000 acres), and it is estimated that an area about as large again remains uncultivated.

The population at present numbers 111,300, of which half are Kurds. Owing to its remoteness and unsettled state, there has been no survey and settlement of land title. New land is taken under cultivation under the old Ottoman right by which ownership is acquired if cultivation can be proved for ten consecutive years.

In the Jezira most of the land is held by large cultivators. In the Euphrates province much of the land has until recently been owned by the villagers, but now the land is passing into the hands of city landowners as pump irrigation is introduced (as in Iraq). The pumps and buckets are supplied against payment in kind by the town merchant or moneyed class; wherever irrigation brings more lands under cultivation, the ownership of the extra land is divided equally between the villagers and the suppliers of water.

The system of tenure is the usual share-tenancy; in the Jezira, according to local custom, the landlord takes one-eighth of the crop to pay taxes, and the remainder is shared equally between landlord and cultivator, the proportion being determined by the supply of labour. With the introduction of machinery—there were about thirty tractors in the area in 1942—the division into employer and labourers has developed: the landowner using the tractor on the land and employing wage labour.

Owing to the scarcity of labour, the position of the agricultural labourer in the Jezira area is better than in the rest of Syria. Health conditions, however, are bad: the Kurds suffer from trachoma and villagers in the Kamichlia district from malaria. In the Euphrates region, the position is worse: the agricultural labourer is weak and underfed, living a hand to mouth existence and exploited by all.

Both in the Jezira and in the Euphrates region there is scope

29:Dunn S-4 (1952)1952 MI Middle East
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471 a loan directly from another government. This attitude is illustrated clearly in the refusal of Syria to sign an agreement with Point Four.
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A loan from an international body is another matter, and the country is seeking a loan of several million dollars from the International Bank for development of transportation, particularly roads in the Jezira, and port facilities at Latakia.

454 Without a large-scale public works program, only minor improvements can be made to the existing system. However, opportunities exist for in-
241 creasing production through private investment.

The good crops of 1950, sold at exceptionally high prices, resulted in high profits and the accumulation of considerable capital. The hope of continued high profits caused much of this capital to be re-invested in equipment and farm improvements. The same incentive also brought out new capital which never before had been invested in agriculture. Judging from the number of tractors, combines and accessories, and irrigation pumps purchased during 1950 and 1951, the investment in agricultural equipment in these two years exceeded the total up to that time. Unprecedented expenditures for general farm improvements also were made, an exceptional step in a country without a history of investment in agricultural development beyond the acquisition of land and a few simple facilities. The capital base has been small. Production has about equaled consumption. There has been little surplus for savings. The few families with capital have used their funds in other ways, seldom for agriculture. But the experience of 1951 was not encouraging for long-continued investment in agricultural development. These investments were costly, many farmers paying double the United States prices for equip-

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These farmers are typical of those in northern Syria. All the tenants of one landlord usually live in villages like this one near Aleppo. Villages vary in size from a few hundred to several thousand depending on the size of the farm.

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ment, and the investors, inexperienced in farming and unequipped to deal with adverse weather, lack of water, and heavy insect infestation, obtained low yields. Many lost their own capital and borrowed money. 454 241

Some investors, who realize that their only chance of coming out on their original investment is to continue their operations and even to make additional investments, plan to expand operations. Future investment naturally will depend on current earnings which will be determined by production and world market prices.

Farmers who may be in a position to continue investing in agricultural development out of their own capital, however, will be a small minority. The need for credit will be great.

Limited credit usually is given to tenants by the landlords during the spring and summer, but most farmers need more. In the past, additional production credit has been extended largely by the merchants and moneylenders at rates from 15 to 50 per cent annually. A few large landlords borrow money from banks at rates as low as 7 and 8 per cent, but only against excellent securities. Interest rates to the tenants who have less collateral are usually higher. Merchants are discontinuing the practice of buying cotton before the crop is made at prices from 50 to 70 per cent of the future market price because in many cases the farmers do not make enough cotton to fulfill their contract. 452 426 [455]

The government has sought to meet the need for credit by creating an agricultural bank, but the capital is limited and size and volume of loans are small. In 1951, for instance, the bank loaned a total of only $5 million to 57,000 cultivators. Private groups are said to have loaned as much on cotton in the Jezira alone. 652 452

LAND TENURE

Land available for cultivation is plentiful, but confused titles, excessive concentration of ownership, and insufficient or restricted use of the state domains hamper development. 423

The government has a major interest in agriculture and the tenure problem. The Ministry of Justice reports that 23 per cent of the farm land is owned by the state and in some of the larger farming areas the percentage runs as high as 69 per cent. There is also a heavy concentration of land in large units owned and operated by a few wealthy landlords, with 29 per cent of the farm land in farms over 250 acres. Most of the large farms in the old agricultural areas are operated on a tenancy system, but many of the farms now being established in the new areas of the Jezira are operated on a day-wage basis with mechanical equipment. This is especially true of wheat farms. A strong middle class of farmers owns about one-third of the land in farms from 25 to 250 acres, and many of them cultivate their land with the help of tenants. Only 15 per cent of the farm land is owned in lots less than 25 acres. 423 471 241 [427] [464]

In an effort to encourage landownership, stability of tenure, and an interest in improvement of the land, a law was passed recently under which state lands are to be sold on long-term, easy-payment plans to landless farmers with a limit of 123 acres to a farmer. The plan was designed especially to settle the nomads. The principal areas concerned are the state domains in the valleys of the Euphrates and Kabur Rivers, which were un- 425 471 311 [166]

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Another significant aspect of the land tenure problem is the financial arrangements between the landlords and tenants. 427 241

Although there are many variations throughout the country, there are three basic contracts.

In the first, where water is available by gravity flow for irrigation and the landowner furnishes only the land, he gets 50 per cent and the tenant gets 50 per cent of the gross yield. In the second type of contract, where the tenant installs pumps and operates them at his own expense and the landlord furnishes the land only, he gets 33⅓ per cent and the tenant gets the rest. In the third case, where the landowner furnishes only the land and the tenant drills artesian wells at his own expense, the landowner gets only 25 per cent of the gross yields. There are variations depending on the crops produced and on who furnishes seed, fertilizer, and equipment. With the growth of mechanization, there is a rising tendency for landowners to prepare the seed beds themselves with large tractors and to take a large share of the produce.

With the advent of mechanization, there is also a noticeable tendency to wage-crop arrangements, particularly in the remote areas like the Jezira where the population is sparse and where the only feasible arrangement for picking cotton is the employment of nomads by the day. 464 241

The greatest concentration of small cultivators who own and operate their own farms is in the older farming areas in the southern part of Syria around Damascus. Around Aleppo the farms are larger in size and owner-operators are fewer in number. 471 241

MECHANIZATION

Mechanization is changing rapidly the primitive practices which still dominate Syrian agriculture. The number of tractors has increased from 200 to almost 2,000 and more than 700 combines are in operation. 241 407

Most of the mechanical equipment is in the Jezira and the agricultural areas around Aleppo. Approximately half the tractors are being used in cotton areas.

To encourage further mechanization the government plans to extend loans to farmers on a five-year basis to finance the purchase of agricultural equipment. So far most of the equipment has been bought privately and for cash. [452]

The first few years have been difficult for the tractor farmers because of the lack of trained operators and the lack of adequate repair facilities, especially spare parts. Now the large manufacturers' agents are establishing modern service stations, repair stations, and mobile repair units. Consideration is even being given to organizing operator training programs.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

All of the agricultural missions stress the need for improvement in basic research and educational programs. The United States-Syria Agricultural Mission has outlined a complete program for agricultural training, research, and extension. Some of the recommendations already have been adopted, such as the establishment of a separate Department of Agriculture. Agricultural 654

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Table 26

SYRIA: Estimated Cost of Producing Cotton in the Upper Euphrates Valley on a Typical Tenant Cultivator Farm
1950

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Cost Items	Cost per Acre
	Dollars
Land preparation and planting	10.86
Seed	2.07
Irrigation (fuel and amortization of engines and pumps)	18.09
Cultivation	6.22
Supervisor's salary	3.78
Harvesting	10.34
Miscellaneous	5.17
Total tenant's cost at plantation	56.47
Tenant's transportation cost to Aleppo	3.74
Tenant's ginning cost at $9 per bale	7.74
Tenant's cost for the ginned cotton from one acre	67.95
Estimated Yield per acre — 616 pounds of lint cotton per acre	
Rent at one-third of crop — 205 " " " " " "	
Tenant's share of lint — 411 pounds	
Estimated Yield per acre — 1,144 pounds of seed	
Rent at one-third of crop — 381 " " "	
Tenant's share of seed — 763 " " "	
Tenant's cost of ginned cotton	$67.95
Less credit for tenant's share of seed at $64 per ton	24.42
Tenant's net cost of ginned cotton	$43.53
Tenant's net cost of ginned cotton divided by pounds } or $43.53 / 411 equals 10.59¢ net cost per pound	

Note: This is a plantation with 250 acres of cotton grown under irrigation in the Upper Euphrates Valley. The landlord gets one-third of the seed cotton at the plantation for land rent. The tenant pays transportation and ginning cost only on his share of the production.

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Source: Trade sources.

COTTONSEED OIL

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Nine crushing mills have a total capacity for approximately 500,000 tons of seed annually. Only four of these are primarily cottonseed oil mills—two in Aleppo, one in Damascus, and one in Hama. Capacity is adequate and prices slightly higher than those in the foreign markets, so most of the seed is now crushed in Syria. However, the extraction rate is low, especially in the older mills, and 1951 cottonseed oil production was given as only 5,000 tons. This represents about 40 per cent of the total vegetable oil produced in the country, the remainder being largely olive oil. Approximately 85 per cent of the cottonseed oil cake is consumed domestically as stock feed, with the other 15 per cent exported.

INSECTS

The principal cotton destroying insects are the spiney bollworm, *Earias insulana* (Boisd.), and the locust. Last year the plant protection department of the Ministry of Agriculture distributed 250 tons of benzine hexachloride and farmers purchased 150 tons directly from dealers. Even so, yields were only half what they were reported to be the previous year and farmers at-

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